

Patient information

Vitreo-retinal Surgery Post-Operative Advice

St Paul's Eye Department

Date of Surgery: _____

Type of Surgery:

- ☐ Macular hole repair
- ☐ Epiretinal membrane peel
- ☐ Retinal detachment repair
- ☐ Others: _____

This information sheet provides you with advice if you need to posture after your eye surgery and answers to some commonly asked questions.

Posturing after surgery (see some postures on the next page):


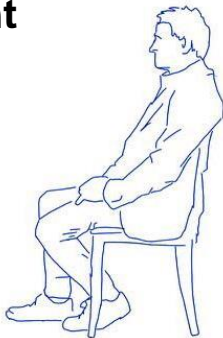




- ☐ You **do not** need to posture
- ☐ You **need** to posture and your posture is

Your **daytime** posture is: _____

Your **night time** posture is: _____

For _____ days.

Types of Posture:

A. Face Down 	B. Upright 
C. Face Down Right Cheek to Pillow 	D. Face Down Left Cheek to Pillow 
E. Lie on Right Side 	F. Lie on Left Side 

Please scan the QR codes below to watch a video on posturing:

After Macular Hole Surgery:



After Retinal Detachment Surgery:



Commonly Asked Questions

- **Will I have pain after the operation?**

It is normal for the operated eye to feel itchy, sticky, gritty and uncomfortable for a few weeks following surgery. If you have discomfort, you can take paracetamol or ibuprofen. If you have sutures placed in or around your eye, you may see them as small purple/black lines or dots. If you had sutures as part of your surgery, it is common to feel like you have something in the eye until the sutures dissolve or are removed.

It is normal for some fluid to leak from around your eye. After surgery, it is common for the white part of your eye to become red. Sometimes the area surrounding your eye can become bruised and swollen. You may become very sensitive to light and you may feel more comfortable wearing tinted or dark sunglasses. In most cases, your eye will take a few weeks to heal but vision may keep on improving for several months following surgery. You will see your doctor in the clinic usually within a few weeks after your operation.

- **Will I need to instil eye drops after the operation?**

You will be given eye drops to reduce inflammation and prevent infection. Sometimes you will be given additional eye drops to keep the pupil dilated or to keep the pressure inside your eye normal. You will be advised on how to use the eye drops before you leave the hospital.

Please scan the QR code below to watch a video on applying your eye drops after surgery.



- **What is posturing?**

Posturing is the term we use to describe the position that you need to adopt following your operation. The figures on the previous pages show you the different postures. You will be advised on which posturing technique to follow on discharge.

Your nurse will assist you in posturing correctly. It will be discussed with you after you have returned from the theatre as instructed by your doctor. If you have not had air, gas or oil in your eye, please go to the when can I drive information.

- **Why must I posture?**

If we put gas or silicone oil in your eye, we will usually ask you to keep your head and body in a particular position. This aims to provide support to heal your retina. With posturing, you will give your retina the best chance to be successfully treated.

- **How long and how do I posture?**

On average you will be asked to posture for up to ten days. Please posture as much as possible. However, you are allowed to have a **ten minute** break from posturing every hour. During your break, you should do gentle exercises to relieve discomfort and promote good circulation. During the night, although you will be asked at times to keep posturing, it is more important that you get a good night's sleep. You do not need to take a ten minute break every hour overnight. Try altering your body position from lying to sitting whilst maintaining your posturing position. Do not lie on your back unless requested.

A stiff upper body or chronic joint problems can make it difficult to posture for the required period. A mild painkiller, for example, paracetamol may help but do not worry if you do not manage to posture perfectly. You can read if the vision in the other eye is good or watch TV. You can also use your laptop or other devices whilst maintaining your posturing.

- **How long will it take for my vision to improve?**

Your vision should gradually improve, but it may take up to six months to achieve your best vision. Frequently, air or gas bubbles are injected into the eye at the time of surgery. This will initially blur your vision significantly. Later on, your sight will begin to return. The timing depends on the type of gas used. Gas bubbles can take up to three months to disappear. Air bubbles will usually disappear within a week.

As the air or gas bubble gets smaller, you will see a horizontal line across your vision, bobbing up and down as you move your head. This line is where the fluid is gradually replacing the bubble. This is similar to a spirit level. You will have sight above this line, and darkness below it. Gradually, the line will move lower down, the seeing area will get bigger, and the dark area will get smaller until it is just a circle at the bottom of your vision, and then it will disappear.

If silicone oil is used, this will usually require surgical removal later. Your vision may be blurry with the silicone oil but this should improve following its removal.

You may notice floaters or double vision after your surgery. These symptoms will usually improve with time. If the double vision is bothersome, patching the eye may help.

Having gas or oil in your eye will also usually lead to the formation of a cataract that will require further surgery in the future.

- **What happens if you require any other surgery?**

You must inform the anaesthetist if you have a general anaesthetic for any operation while there is still gas in your eye as he or she cannot use nitrous oxide gas as part of your anaesthetic.

It is also crucial to inform any medical team dealing with you in the case of an emergency if you have gas in your eye.

- **Can I travel?**

You must not fly or travel to places at high altitudes while there is gas or air in your eye as there is a possible risk of expansion of the bubble in your eye. This will increase your eye pressure and potentially cause harm as well as pain. **You may travel in an aeroplane if you have a silicone oil bubble, as this does not expand.**

- **When can I drive?**

This would depend on various factors including the type of eye surgery you have had, the vision in your eyes and the type of vehicle you drive. Please speak to your doctor for further information. Please do not drive if you have developed double vision or if you do not feel confident to do so.

- **When may I return to work or my normal activities?**

Most people will need about two weeks off work after surgery but sometimes this may be longer. Please discuss with your GP for a sick leave extension if you feel this is required. The amount of time off work will depend on the kind of work you do and the kind of surgery that has been done. You may watch TV and read. Reading may be uncomfortable for several days, but using the eyes will not cause any damage.

You may go outside as usual. If conditions are windy or dusty, wear your own glasses or dark glasses to avoid dust or dirt in the eye.

- **When can I shower and wash my hair?**

You may shower or bathe when you get home, but avoid getting water in the eye which had the operation for two weeks. Try to shampoo with your head tilted back to avoid getting shampoo or water in your eye.

You may shave, brush your teeth, or comb your hair. Do not use make-up, mascara, or creams/lotions around the eye which had the operation for two weeks.

Certain symptoms could mean that you need prompt treatment.

Please contact the St Paul's Emergency Eye Department on Tel: 0151 7063949 if you have any questions following discharge or are experiencing any of the following symptoms:

- Worsening severe sharp or dull pain in or around the eye.
- Loss or darkening of vision.
- Increasing redness.
- Nausea or vomiting.
- Pus-like discharge.

Feedback

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future.

Following your discharge from the hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt-out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

Further information

St Paul's Emergency Eye Department

Tel: 0151 706 3949

Text phone number: 18001 0151 706 3949

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All Trust approved information is available on request in alternative formats, including other languages, easy read, large print, audio, Braille, moon and electronically.

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